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THE ALMIGHTY'S EVERLASTING CIRCLES.

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THE

ALMIGHTY'S EVERLASTING CIRCLES.

AN ESSAY.

BY THE

VENERABLE HENRY JEFFREYS, A.M.

LATE ARCHDEACON OF BOMBAY.

Third Edition, much Enlarged and Improbed.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S REPLY TO OBJECTIONS AGAINS
STATEMENT WHICH APPEARED IN AN INDIAN PERIODICAL.



LONDON:

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1856.

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TO THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP CARR,

LATE BISHOP OF BOMBAY.

MY LORD,

If only one mind capable of abstract thought, and possessed of influence in the literary world, should be induced to read these Essays, it is believed they will be rescued from oblivion, and be made a means of usefulness.* They are the produce of a master-mind, one whose deep reasoning did not disturb his unaffected piety; one whose

* Should this little volume meet a favourable reception, some other papers by the same Author are ready for publication.

philanthropic character and philological powers would have entitled him to a high position as an author, had his life been spared to revise and organise the produce of the leisure hours he gleaned from a course of active labour in a tropical climate.

I do not apologise for dedicating these Essays to your Lordship.

Archdeacon Jeffreys was your College friend, and fellow-labourer, next in succession for more than thirty years, the last ten years of which he was your Archdeacon; and the affectionate friendship which subsisted between your family and his was uninterrupted to the last. How little did your Lordship expect when he bade you farewell in the land of cholera, that he should in England fall a victim to that sad malady! yet so it was permitted by Him, in whose hands are the

issues of life and death. After officiating in the Church of a friend at Exeter, and retiring to rest in his usual health, he was found the next morning in the last stage of cholera. The disease had attacked his head from the first, and deprived him of power to alarm the house, and obtain the care and assistance his friends would so gladly have bestowed upon him; but even in this afflicting dispensation there was mercy, The King of Terrors found the sufferer in a state of reconciliation and peace, and not unwilling to depart. A little while before he left town for Exeter, on lying down to rest, he observed to his beloved wife: "How delightful would it be, if, when we close our eyes in sleep on earth, we might open them in heaven, to be with our dear Saviour for ever through eternity!"

It is scarcely necessary to request your Lordship to recommend these Essays, and to use your influence to make them known, so that he who wrote them with a heart full of love and gratitude for his Saviour, and tender concern to the souls of sinners, may be permitted, though dead, to speak and tell of the wonderful works of God.

With the heartfelt prayer, that He who alone can give the increase will mercifully bless and abundantly prosper this work,

I am, my Lord,
Your Lordship's
Obedient humble servant,
THE EDITOR.

THE

ALMIGHTY'S EVERLASTING CIRCLES.

THE line of demarcation which separates the works of man from the works of God, and constitutes the peculiar feature of each, is this—In the works of man, and in all human machinery, the effect never can be made either to reproduce or repair its own cause. The cause acts for a time: its energy dies Man can never away, and the effect ceases. make a watch, which, having gone down, will wind up itself again. Here is the limit over which man can never pass. Thousands of other instances might be adduced, but this one is characteristic of them all. But in the works of God the effect comes round again, and acts upon its own cause, repairs

it, sustains its energy, often aggravates and increases it, and if necessary, reproduces it altogether. Thus, in the works of God, the cause and the effect act and re-act, generate and re-generate each other, till it often becomes difficult for man to say which is the cause, and which is the effect. the Almighty acts in everlasting circles, and his works contain within themselves a selfrestoring energy, or a self-re-producing power capable of enduring for ever and for ever. This is true in every variety of his works and in all his appointments, without one solitary exception. It is true in the whole kingdom of matter; it is true in the whole wonderful region of mind; it is true in all those works of the Almighty, where both mind and matter are concerned, where mind acts upon matter, and matter upon mind. true in morals; it is true in physics. true in all that relates to time, as well as all that concerns eternity. It is true in religion and all the Christian graces of the soul. It is true in politics, political economy, and the causes of the wealth of nations, and of the rise and fall of empires. It is true in health; it is true in disease; it is an everlasting energy for ever-increasing good, or (horrible reflection!) it is an everlasting energy for ever-accumulating evil.

And here I feel obliged to interrupt my subject, in order to say that I utterly decline entering into the question of the origin of evil. If man be wise, he will let, this awful question alone for ever, as being infinitely beyond his comprehension. But this we might expect, that when once man has introduced evil among the works of God, it will then obey the universal law which he has established among all his works, of increasing for ever and ever. For evil produces disorganization and disorder among the lovely works of God, and these produce effects which, according to his own immutable laws, tend to increase their own causes, and to multiply and grow

worse and worse, to all eternity. This is the natural tendency of evil, and may throw some light upon the nature and the equity of eternal punishment. But if in any instances this tendency is counteracted, and moral evil does not multiply itself for ever, gathering food and strength from its own effects; if the moral disease is healed, and good implanted in its stead; this must be a distinct provision, by the power and mercy of God.

I shall produce a variety of examples to illustrate this grand feature of the Almighty's works, taken from his appointments, both in the moral and the physical. world, but especially taken from the whole nature and constitution of man, from his body, and from his mind; from those complex operations in which both body and mind are concerned; in health and in disease; for good and for evil. And I humbly hope, that I shall be able to throw some little light upon a beautiful and mysterious subject, and to extract from it some valuable

lessons, and some wholesome warnings. And while we contemplate this wonderful property of the works of God, the Almighty's everlasting circles, may we all learn to tremble and adore.

The first example I shall take, shall be a case embracing both mind and matter; both the intellectual mind of man, and that organ of the body which is the appointed instrument to execute its designs. The human hand is both the servant and the schoolmaster of the soul. It is the servant to obey its commands, and to execute all its vast designs. But it is also the tutor to expand and enlarge the ideas of the soul a thousand fold, and is itself the cause and origin of millions of those very commands which itself obeys. The first part of this proposition, that the hand is exquisitely constructed to be the servant of the intellectual mind of man, is very obvious, and can be overlooked by none, who reflect for one moment upon the subject. If man had no organ of the body better adapted to execute the designs of the intellect than the hoof of an animal, it is evident that he would long in vain for such instruments as the chronometer, the printing-press, and the steamengine, supposing him capable of conceiving such ideas. But it is easy to show that if man had been created without that beautiful instrument, the hand, he would have been utterly incapable of ever conceiving such ideas. It is not meant here to assert that a being endowed with an intellectual mind like man, but destitute of the human hand. would be incapable of comprehending these ideas, supposing they were suggested to him by another intellect, or that he would be incapable of understanding and admiring these beautiful works of art, supposing they could be derived from some other source, and then submitted to his contem-But the meaning is that, if there plation. had been no such member in this lower world as the human hand, the chronometer,

the printing-press, and the steam-engine, with all the productions of human art, in all their endless varieties, would never have been made, and that the very ideas of them would never have been suggested to the human understanding. The mind would never have conceived them unless there had been some source from which they might be at first impregnated. The great Locke speaks most truly when he says, that there are no such things as innate ideas; and that all ideas are taught to the mind from some external source. The first simple ideas are impressed upon the mind by the external senses; but the more complex ideas resulting from the arts and sciences, are slowly formed step by step, expanding gradually from the most rude and barbarous embryos, while the head and the hand are mutually indebted to each other, for every stage of the expansion. The first crude inventions of the human mind (suggested to it by the wants of the body,) are crudely and imperfectly

executed by the human hand; but the reasonable soul contemplating these semibarbarous works, sees their imperfections, and contrives still further improvements; and when these again are executed by her servant, the hand, they suggest to the reasonable soul still grander and nobler designs; and this process goes on for ever in one everlasting circle. Thus the intellectual soul of man is continually expanded and enlarged, in contemplating the works of the human hand; or in using these again as instruments in examining the works of nature, or manufacturing materials, imbibes countless millions of ideas. the human intellect and the human hand are both essentially necessary to this beau-If either of them had been tiful process. totally wanting in the world, the first barbarous embryo of the rude idea would have been cut off from all further improvement, and all the millions of subsequent ideas, with all their associations and connexions, would

have remained shut out from the human mind for ever. How many millions of ideas, for instance, are suggested to the human mind, by means of the press: or rather, by means of the mind and the press acting alternately upon each other in one perpetual circle! But where would have been the printing-press, and all the knowledge it has poured forth upon the world, if it had not been for the human hand? The very same question may be asked concerning the art of writing, and all the ideas, and all the knowledge that letters and manuscripts have communicated to mankind before the invention of the printing-press. For these are but more imperfect works of the human hand acting by a more tedious process; and if we compare former ages with the present, it will appear that the number, variety, and richness of ideas abroad upon the world, and wherewith the human mind has been stored, have always kept pace with the degree of perfection attained by the works

of the human hand. History informs us in what a rude and barbarous state the most enlightened nations once have been, and what once was the barrenness and paucity of their ideas. Suppose then our savage forefathers, the naked Druids in the woods. had been created with the hoof of an animal instead of the human hand, will any man say that such beings would ever have formed a nation of mighty and gigantic intellect such as Britain now is? On the contrary, such a supposition must carry us far below the most barbarous nation upon earth. For even our rude forefathers derived the few complex ideas they had, from contemplating the works of their own hands. They could make huts of the boughs of trees, and clothing of the skins of beasts, and in killing these, or making those, they would require a vast variety of ideas, besides the moral ideas of property. But we may go backwards yet again to a still earlier stage of this beautiful process. Every observing man may see it

with his own eyes, without going among savage nations for an example. There probably is not a creature upon earth so utterly destitute of ideas as the new-born offspring of man. But let any observer mark it well. and notice it, as soon as it begins to make use of its hands; say, from ten months old and upwards; let him mark the earnestness with which it seizes, examines, and handles things; let him mark how soon it begins to be busy and troublesome with its hands in a thousand ways, pulling everything out of its place and order, examining, tearing, destroying; and here he will behold ADAM Its little hands never ACQUIRING IDEAS. rest: no, not one moment of its waking hours. Young Adam, in his eagerness to acquire ideas, often pulls down mischief on his own head. Thus in the new-born infant and the savage, and in man in every stage of culture, the hands mightily increase the rapidity and power with which ideas are acquired, and the intellectual soul ex-

pands more and more continually, and multiplies her ideas in proportion as the works of the human hand increase in number. variety, and beauty. But if mankind never had members capable of making these things, they never would have conceived these ideas: and this, not from any defect in the capacity for acquiring knowledge, for (to come to our conclusion at once) I assert, that if such creatures as these had the brain so constructed as to have the largest capacity for acquiring knowledge that nation ever had, their actual knowledge, and the scope of their reasoning powers, would have scarcely extended beyond those of a cunning animal Thus the hand is the schoolmaster of the soul; expands and enlarges her ideas, and is the cause and origin of millions of commands from the soul, which the hand itself is the servant to obey. There are now in this world millions of ideas and things, which, if it had not been for the human hand, "eye would have never seen, nor

ear heard, neither would they have entered into the heart of man to conceive." Here is a beautiful instance of the Almighty's everlasting circles. The cause commands the effect, the effect expands the cause, and unfolds its energy; and how far this may go, what wonders the hand may further execute at the command of the soul, and what amazing powers the soul may yet develope, what new ideas she may yet acquire in contemplating the works of her own hands, none but the Creator himself can tell.

The human tongue is another example of the same kind. It is the appointed servant to give utterance to the ideas of the intellectual soul. The intellectual mind of man both instructs and commands the tongue to speak. Pre-existing ideas are the cause and origin of the words by which they are expressed. But if it be true that ideas are the origin of words, it is no less true that the utterance of words is the source and

parent of countless millions of ideas. even true that a man often receives new ideas, suggested to his mind, by the utterance of his own thoughts. But the chief power by which the tongue becomes the prolific parent of new ideas, is by enriching the mind of one man with the ideas of another. By ruminating upon another man's ideas; by contrasting, and comparing them with his own, and thus forming endless new combinations, (that lively power, the imagination fluttering with fairy wing over the whole) a man's mind (especially a reflecting mind) is stored with ideas of such richness and variety, that the ever-increasing language of the tongue is still too lean and meagre Thus new words are invented, to express. and the tongue is commanded to give utterance to new-born ideas, of which the tongue itself was the cause and origin. How often does the contribution of one man's mind by means of the tongue strike out a new light, and suggest a new train of thought to the mind of another, which again employs the tongue in one perpetual circle!

It ought here to be mentioned, that the press is a tongue by which one individual can speak to millions at a time. Thus one powerful mind can set millions of minds a thinking! The press, too, is a tongue by which scattered millions may communicate their thoughts to each other. This will give to thinking millions combination and unity of design and thought, and consolidate a new intellect called the Nation's MIND: and the press will then become the Nation's And these two powers will act upon each other and expand each other's energies in one perpetual circle. And here again it is often difficult, if not impossible, to say which is the cause and which is the effect. It is much disputed whether the press be the leader, or the organ of the public mind, whether it be the maker, or the "mirror" of the times. The answer is, that it is either or both in one perpetual circle.

The next example of the Almighty's everlasting circles I shall take from the body alone, without any relation to the mind.

It is well known that the nerves in some wonderful manner are the source of all life and motion, so that if a nerve be divided, or palsied by disease, the member which that nerve supplies with vital energy becomes helpless and palsied too, and loses all power of motion. Thus, the circulation of the blood for instance, (in common with all other motion) is owing to the nervous energy causing the pulsation of the heart and arteries. But the brain itself, the source of all this energy, if it be not duly nourished by the blood, has no nervous energy at all. Therefore the brain and the nervous system cause the circulation of the blood; and the blood gives life and energy to the nerve. The cause causes the effect, and the effect causes the cause, in one eternal circle, till man with all his wisdom is puzzled to say which is the cause, and

which is the effect. A countless multitude of similar examples might be found in the structure of the body of the Almighty's everlasting circles. The complete circle described by the blood as it returns again and again to the heart from whence it came, the digestive organs and absorbent systems, the stomach itself, the feeder of the whole system, and the father of the family, having its own coats nourished in its turn, all are examples to the point, and generate PERPETUAL MO-TION,—that problem which man will never solve, the boundary over which he will never pass. And all this curious frame-work, these bodies so fearfully and wonderfully made, seem to contain within themselves the principle of immortality; at least, nourishing themselves, and repairing their own waste, by food of their own culture, man can see no visible reason why they are not immortal; and old age, decay and death, are as mysterious and incomprehensible as life itself. And in fact they are perpetual, only it has

pleased the Almighty that the perpetuity is not vested in the individual, but in the species. The spark of life once kindled, life's motion once commenced, in the parents. is never extinguished, never ceases; but is handed down to the children from generation to generation; and the effect reproduces a "fac-simile" of its own cause for ever! The same is true of the seed of trees and vegetables. The present generation of "living things" must return to the earth from whence they were taken, and their corrupted remains will hereafter form the food and nourishment, and the very substance too, of future generations, in one everlasting circle! And, except by revelation, man could discover no reason why this process should not go on for ever and for ever.

The rain of heaven watering the earth, and returning to the sea from whence it came, is another instance of the Almighty's everlasting circles.

Whence the perpetual motion of that ever-

flowing river rolling on from age to age; while successive generations of the human race disport as children on its banks; attain life's appointed period of old age, decay, and death; then return again to that earth of whose materials they and their fathers were formed, and leave their seed behind them to undergo the same process in everlasting circles. But the lovely river still rolls on. If it were man's contrivance, it would soon run dry: or the mightiest engine with which he could feed its source, would itself want feeding. But not so the Almighty's rivers. They are supplied from the salt waters of the sea by nature's great distillery! beautiful process feeds the fountains, springs. and rivers. These, having performed their appointed task, making the earth to bring forth food for men and animals, again return to the waters of the ocean; again are raised above the earth, and fall in refreshing showers; again form fountains, springs, and rivers, which again mingle with

the waters of the sea in one perpetual circle.

But the chemical change which takes place during this process also illustrates our present doctrine, no less than the mechanism by which this mighty circulation is per-For it appears that every drop of formed. spring water in the earth thus becomes salt, after having served its appointed period. And as the Almighty does nothing in vain, there is reason to believe that if it were not for this periodical change of state it would at last spoil, and become unfit to perform its functions in the field of universal nature. Spring water is more beautiful than man's imagination could have conceived if he had not seen it. It is the life's-blood of universal nature, and circulates through all her veins, making the earth to smile like a garden. Having performed its allotted duty. it now requires that change, which it undergoes by mixing with the salt waters of the sea. The Almighty sees this change to be needful; when it is again raised from the ocean and becomes nature's arterial fluid. For it has now returned to the heart of this mighty circulation, and the winds of heaven, which appear to be nature's lungs, arterialise it, and bear it on their wings to the summits of the mountains, or drop it on the plains beneath, again to nourish all animated nature, again to contract defilement, and again to be distilled pure and regenerate from the waters of the sea, in one everlasting circle.*

Let us now take leave of this earth, and

* Compared with the abundance of the rain from heaven, it is but a few drops of water that all the power and all the machinery of man could ever raise to the altitude of the mountains, or the lofty table-lands. But when once it is raised by the Almighty, it becomes a mechanical power, readymade to the hand of man, of far greater might and energy than any other power upon earth. For this water, in its descent into the low country, might easily be made to bring up its own weight of goods and merchandise, very nearly ton for ton. A very little stream or rill, or (if there were no stream) a

see if we cannot discover among the heavenly bodies traces of the Almighty's everlasting circles.

What shall we say of the sun, that vast

very inconsiderable reservoir of water on the brow of the table-land, with the smallest aqueduct from it to let off the water as required, would, in its descent into the low country, do more work than one hundred thousand horses; and the largest waggons and the heaviest pieces of artillery would come tumbling up the mountain's side, as if they were children's Commercial roads, instead of winding in tovs. tedious defiles among the mountains, making circuits of twenty, and even thirty times the direct distance, in order to find an ascent, ought to be constructed right up the mountain's side, (the steeper the better). Then it would be only necessary to pass a chain round a fixed pully at the top, and attach two cisterns upon wheels, one to each end of the chain, each capable of containing (say) fifteen or twenty tons of Then, whichever cistern was uppermost, a child might fill it with water from a little gate not bigger than his hand; and whatever was hooked on behind the empty cystern below, the heaviest guns, or the largest waggons, would come running up the mountain's side, as if the whole concern were animated with life. If the descent were too long for a body of fire? But how shall we form a conception of the light and heat which it pours forth on every side? Our earth, as seen from the sun, (if visible at all,) would

single chain, it might be broken into several stages. having another fixed pulley, and another chain at each stage; for the same body of water would do its work on every stage down to the very bottom of the valley beneath. A very inconsiderable pond holds 100,000 tons of water, or (still better) if there were a little stream, it would do more work than all the horses in the state or empire. In many cases only the balance between the weight of the imports and the exports, would require to be raised by water. Far more than the average share of rain falls upon the brows of the mountains, so that there are no places in the world where streams are more frequently found. and where reservoirs could be so easily constructed. A single pulley is the very simplest and cheapest of And lastly, the shortness of the all machinery. direct road, (say) one mile, instead of constructing a road fifteen or twenty, would more than compensate the expense of the first construction.

I have known a corps of artillery encamped for weeks on a mountain's side, labouring to accomplish a task which a child, by letting down a little water, would do for them in a quarter of an hour.

be the smallest speck that the eye can be-Suppose then a hollow sphere as large as the diameter of the earth's orbit. And suppose as many millions of millions of worlds as would complete the shell of this sphere, of which the sun itself is in the centre; and then remember that every one of these would receive as much light and heat as our earth now receives; and we may form some faint conception of that flood of light and heat which the sun pours forth on every side. But how is it that this stupendous fire does not burn out? We can conceive no fire that shall not at last exhaust itself by consuming its own materials. But here comes into play the doctrine of the Almighty's everlasting circles. We cannot indeed assert it, but the whole analogy of universal nature which I have hitherto traced, renders it more than probable that, within the substance of that vast body the sun, a process is going on which is the exact reverse of what is taking place at the surface, and that (if I may be permitted to coin such a word to suit my purpose) its materials are burnt and *unburnt* in one everlasting circle.

And last of all, as the spheres revolve in their orbits they trace out huge diagrams of the *Almighty's everlasting circles*.

Before we take leave of the natural world and enter upon the field of morals, I promised to show that the same doctrine of the Almighty's everlasting circles, (the cause aggravating the effect, and the effect the cause) holds good in the various states of health and disease. It is well known that the symptoms of a disease often extremely aggravate the disease from whence they sprung. Sometimes they become more important than the disease itself, and sometimes they act and re-act upon each other in so curious and complex a manner, that the physician finds it hard to say which is the symptom, and which is the original disease.

To this class may be referred those habits, either of mind or body, which appear to be

the effect of certain states of the constitution as their cause. Thus a tendency to grossness and obesity in very young persons, being unnatural to youth, may be fairly set down as a species of disease. Even the smallest degree of it during the active years of youth, may be almost termed incipient disease. Now it is well known that in proportion as this temperament exists in youth, it induces indisposition to exertion, and a dislike of that activity which is the life and joy of early youth. But here, too, the effect aggravates its cause. For the sedentary and indolent habits, which are the effect and consequence of this temperament, themselves become the cause of that torpor and inactivity in the absorbent system which continually increases the weight and grossness of the body. And this again produces a still further unwillingness in the unfortunate subject to run, and race, and sport with his young companions, so that his constitution and his daily habits now act alternately upon

each other in a continual circle, which is growing worse from day to day.

We now come to a branch of this subject, which is by far the most important of all, as furnishing lessons of practical instruction in which our duty and happiness are most intimately concerned. For the universal law we are now considering, of the effect increasing for ever the energy of its own cause, holds true in the department of mind, and in the whole range of morals. And surely nothing can be more important to our happiness than so to discipline the mind and regulate the conduct, as to get into a system of ever-increasing good; and nothing can be conceived more horrible, than to be involved in a system of ever-increasing evil.

The first instance we shall produce, is in the effect of faith upon a man's life and conversation; and the effect which a man's life and conversation will produce upon his faith. Faith is represented in Scripture as that living principle which unites the sinner to Christ, works by love, overcomes the world, and brings forth all the fruit of holy obedience in the life. And it is in proportion to the greatness of real faith that these effects are produced. It is in proportion as a man really believes the truths of Scripture, lavs hold of its promises, and fears its threatenings, that this belief will produce its effects upon his life and conversation, in all holy obedience. But these very effects, if they be the genuine fruit of faith, will powerfully increase, nourish, and invigorate that holy principle from whence they spring: for a watchful obedience to the commands of the gospel tends exceedingly to increase " He that will do a man's faith and love. the will of my Father, shall know of the doctrine."

On the other hand, whence comes sin, but from an evil heart of unbelief? It is because men do not really believe the truths of the gospel that they live in sin. Sin is the natural fruit of unbelief. But if unbelief produces sin, it is no less certain that sin will produce unbelief. For St. Paul takes the other end of this connexion and speaks of some who having *first* put away a good conscience concerning faith have made shipwreck. Nothing will so surely lead a man to unbelief in the truths of God's word as such a life as will lead him to wish those truths untrue.

Again, a hardened conscience emboldens a man to sin, while every act of sin more and more sears and hardens the conscience; and these tend in their own nature to aggravate each other, and to go on for ever; the effect increasing the cause, and the cause increasing the effect. Nor does there appear any limit to this process in the nature of sin itself, set free from the restraints of providence and grace. So that sin in eternity would seem to have a self-creating energy and an ever-growing power to increase for ever.

On the other hand, the same principle we

are considering holds good with respect to a tender conscience. A tender conscience renders a man watchful of his steps and fearful to offend, and causes him to dread sin. But. on the other hand, every whisper of the conscience, instantly listened to, and faithfully obeyed, makes the conscience still more tender, and makes her voice more and more a faithful monitor. In this way the tenderness of a man's conscience, and the high and holy standard of excellence that his conscience will demand of him, will outstrip his actual attainments, and leave them far behind. His conscience will become daily more and more tender, the more it be obeyed; till at last it will shrink, like the sensitive plant, at the least touch of defilement, or the least approach of evil. The world in general have no conception of the range through which the human conscience is capable of extending. Comparing the conscience of mankind to a graduated scale, they do indeed know something of the lower end of the scale, for

they see the depths of degradation to which the conscience of individuals is capable of sinking, and how hard and seared it may become; but they know nothing of the · upper end of the scale, the height of heavenly holiness, the exquisite tenderness that it is capable of attaining. Hence the fair everyday characters of the world conceive themselves to be somewhere near the top of this scale, but they are grievously mistaken: they are not even so high as the middle of it. For it is a fact that some eminent Christians, by watching, praying, and striving to be holy as God is holy, by trying in good earnest to do the will of their Father as the angels do it in heaven, have at last attained a tenderness of conscience as far above that of the fair every-day characters of the world, as theirs is above that of the felon or the murderer. But such a Christian's actual attainments, though far higher than those of the world in general, are by no means higher in the same proportion. Hence it is, that if we could put our hand upon the man who has attained a greater degree of holiness in the heart, and excellence in the life, than any other man in the whole world, we should find this is precisely the man who most deeply feels, and most bitterly laments, his immense distance from his own standard. For if he "could do what he would," he would indeed attain angelic holiness. such a man never can even approach his own standard; for the further he advances, the further it recedes before him. His standard, indeed, is the holiness of Christ, but as, in following after it, he becomes more and more sensible what that holiness is, his conscience becomes so exquisitely tender, that, while he daily draws nearer to the mark, he is daily more and more sensible of the distance that remains.

Here is a mighty instance of the effect aggravating its own cause—a tender con-

science producing a holy life, and a holy life making the conscience ten thousandfold more tender.

May I be permitted here to pause and observe, that the view now before us will explain how it is, that to talk to such a man as this about being justified by his good works, will seem to him as little less than the ravings of insanity. He wants no disquisitions and laboured arguments about faith and works to settle this point. For although his good works were better and holier than those of any other man in the world, yet, when brought to the test of his own still higher and holier standard, they seem to him to be execrable pollution and defilement, and to have contracted a hideous stain, which nothing but the blood of Christ can wash away. This will explain why St. Paul seemed to himself to be the chief of sinners; and he, who was perhaps the holiest and most laborious of all the apostles, desired most of all to renounce his

own righteousness and to be justified by faith in Christ.

"An important digression from the main subject."

The reverse of the picture we have just drawn, of a tender conscience and a right belief resulting from a holy life, or rather being both the cause and the effect of a holy life in one perpetual circle; the reverse of this picture, I say, will explain to us the quilt of having an ignorant and misinformed conscience, or (to speak more generally) the guilt of having formed wrong opinions on any important points of religion or morals, which it is the duty and happiness of all men to know and understand. Reader, it is well worth our while to digress a little from our main subject to consider this point, because much delusion and fallacy prevails upon it, bearing the sanction of very high names; and the parade of much false philosophy has been employed to defend a grievous error connected with it. It is a favourite

theory with many who set up for philosophers in the present day, that no man can help his belief or his opinions, inasmuch as they are not under the control of the will; that there is therefore no guilt in a man's holding wrong opinions, provided he sincerely entertains them; that therefore, right or wrong, belief or opinions are not proper subjects of reward or punishment.

Now, reader, I beg your patient and candid attention, while I prove to you, in opposition to these assertions,—

1st. That a man's belief and opinions on points of religion, morals, and duty, are under the control of his will, in such a way, and by the use of such means as render him responsible for them, and that he can help his opinions.

2nd. That therefore a wrong belief in religion, or a wrong opinion in morals, is sinful; and that this doctrine of *sincerity*, in the sense here used, is nonsense.

3rd. That therefore a man's belief and

opinions are a proper subject of reward and punishment.

Before we proceed to our proof, we may observe, that Scripture stands committed on this point. No one can open the word of God, and read it, even with common attention. without perceiving that the most encouraging and engaging promises are everywhere held out to faith: while on the other hand the most awful threatenings are denounced against unbelief. And it is a principle evidently assumed throughout the Scriptures, that belief and unbelief, knowledge and ignorance, moral light and darkness, are proper subjects of reward and punishment. Now, in opposition to this principle, several modern writers of great talent have argued in this "How can this be just? manner. belief is not optional. It does not in any case, or in any subject, depend upon my It is the decision of my judgment will. upon the evidence before me, and is the result of that evidence. It is utterly out of

my power to say I will believe or disbelieve anything, even facts and propositions relating to worldly matters, much less can I choose whether I will believe or disbelieve matters of Revelation. I say then, that my belief on the contrary is in no degree the effect of my will, and therefore is not in its nature a proper subject for reward or punishment. And since my opinions are not the result of choice but of evidence, I contend that there is no guilt whatever in my opinions and belief whatever they may be, provided I sincerely entertain them."

Now this plausible reasoning would be all very true, if man were a being consisting solely of intellect, and if there were really nothing but reason sitting in cool, deliberate judgment upon the evidence before her. But the misfortune of this theory is, that it leaves out the heart, which is by far the most important, the grand constituent part of man. Indeed, this theory is true enough in mere abstract questions of natural philo-

sophy, in which the heart has no concern, which involve no practical consequences upon believing them, which point to no painful duty to be done, no besetting and favourite sin to be overcome; in short, no self-denial of any kind. But in moral questions where all these are involved, the heart, and the affections, and the passions, have far more influence than the reason and the judgment, not only in determining a man's actions, but also in forming his opinions and belief. For this reason it is that the Scriptures refer unbelief to an evil heart: "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." And is there no sin in an evil Is there no sin in indulging the passions till they so blind and hood-wink reason, that she becomes unable to form a sound and sober judgment upon the evidence before her? Is there no sin in having debauched and corrupted the heart, till the passions are all enlisted on the side of evil, so that when reason tries to form a judgment they clamour for an evil and deceitful sentence? Is there no sin in having contracted such a love of sensual pleasure, that reason cannot seriously entertain a proposition showing the necessity of self-denial? Is there no sin in having the heart so thoroughly worldly, so utterly alien from God and heaven, that the judgment is unable to balance the value of his love and favour, the importance of the soul and eternity, in anything like a rational scale, so that when reason comes to decide upon these her conclusions are most perverse and absurd?

But it may be proper here to explain more particularly and definitely how it is that the heart and the passions bewilder the judgment. When a man sets himself to inquire into the nature and evidences of the gospel, and the true state of his own heart respecting it, or indeed into any moral proposition involving self-indulgence or self-

denial, a vast variety of thoughts and reasons will present themselves to his mind on both sides, some for good, and some for evil, some tending to lead, and some to mislead him. Now as these cannot all be present to the mind at once, but can only be entertained by the mind one at a time, a corrupt heart and inflamed passions make reason an unjust judge, by fixing the attention almost exclusively upon those views and arguments which tend to their own indulgence, and keeping the opposite views and arguments out of sight, or at least hurrying the mind away from them, and thus blinding the reason, and stifling the still small voice of conscience. It is well known how any soul-absorbing passion disables the mind from attending to anything else. And will any man say that there is no sin in all this? Or will he venture to assert that the opinions and decisions which a man forms in this way are the honest decisions of the judgment? much for the innocence of wrong opinions

and belief, of which our objectors are so confident!

But, further, it is easy to prove that the assertion that a man's opinions and belief are in no degree under the control of the will, is a false proposition. It is easy to show that a man has the power of controlling and modifying his belief on questions of religion, and morals, and duty, and that, too, by adopting a course so honest and upright, as shall carry with it irresistible conviction to the man's own bosom that he is not deceiving himself. A part of our objector's assertion is perfectly true, namely, "that belief is not the result of one solitary effort of the will." No man can sit down on a given day, and say, "I am determined I will believe such a proposition in morals, or such a truth in God's word." But it does not therefore follow that a man possesses no means whatever of controlling his belief, and that it depends merely and solely upon the evidence presented to his mind. It depends

also upon the state of the heart and affec-And this state of the heart and affections depends upon the course of habit and conduct which he has uniformly pursued through life, and which it has been within his power to discipline. A life of self-indulgence on the one hand, or a life of selfdenial on the other, will make all the difference in the world in a man's views of the same moral evidence. A man may, by God's blessing on his prayers and honest endeavours, by self-denial, by mortifying the fleshly lusts, by keeping the body under, give the soul as it were the ascendancy, and spiritualise the mind, so that it shall for the most part be holy, heavenly, and spiritual in all its actings, and not the mere slave of the passions. Thus opinion and belief are the result of a series of voluntary actions, though not the result of one solitary effort of the will. And for these actions, and their effect upon the purity and strength of the reasoning powers of the soul, man is answerable to his Maker But here let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean to say that man, by any course of conduct, can give himself living faith, that faith which "worketh by love and overcometh the world." Such faith as this, God alone can give. But I mean, that the result of this conduct will prove, that simple conviction of the truth is INDIRECTLY under the influence of the will, and not the naked result of evidence. Nor is this all: the man has now entered upon one of those circles of whose celestial arc faith itself forms a part. He is now "waiting upon God," and God will not suffer him to come to a false conclusion upon any matter, which it is of real importance that he should understand; and he will soon carry him forward to that faith which enables a man to love and to obey as well as to understand.

On the other hand, a man may pursue a conduct which is the very reverse of all this.

By sensual self-indulgence, or by intellectual self-idolatry, he may so sear the conscience, harden the heart, and stupify the understanding, that he is utterly unable to come to any conclusion which does not either flatter his pride, or gratify his sensual passions. And may a man corrupt the powers of the soul to any degree, so as to deprive himself of all power of judging soberly, and yet remain innocent in the opinion he last forms, provided only he be sincere in his belief? If we say that nothing more is necessary than sincerity, taken in this sense, to make a man innocent in his opinions, whatever they may be, we do, in fact, assert that, "be a man's opinions ever so absurd and preposterous, ever so mischievous and hurtful to mankind, ever so contrary to right reason and right morals, we are nevertheless bound to conclude that these opinions are as much the result of fair, candid. and impartial examination, as if they were

agreeable to all that is good, and right, and virtuous." * For, by the supposition, he sincerely entertains them; and this, according to this theory, is all that is necessary to make the entertainment of them innocent. And as for the fact that the said opinions are contrary to all right reason and right morals, for this the man has the notable plea of ignorance. Our Lord said to his disciples, "The time cometh, when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." By this rule it is quite sufficient that he thinks so. The persecutors of the primitive Christians bound children and tender virgins to the stake, and burnt with fire mothers of children yet unborn. But for these monsters we have the compendious apology, that they thought that they were right. But religious persecutions

^{*} The Author does not feel quite certain whether this sentiment is his own, or whether he may not possibly be writing from recollection of some author he has read.

are not the only difficulties the case presents. In feudal struggles for power, wars for glory, nay, under the staid and sober plea of preserving social order and obedience to the laws, acts of murder, robbery, and bloodshed, have been perpetrated, and the perpetrators have been so convinced that they were right, that they would have been perfectly astonished if you had suggested the possibility that they might be wrong. Here, then, is a ready apology for all the crime that has been sincerely committed in the world. For once admit the principle, and you cannot stop. It is impossible to draw the line. You cannot judge of a man's sincerity. If indeed you judge of a man's sincerity by the tendency of his opinions, and the moral quality of his actions, as you would judge of a tree by its fruit,—and as common sense as well as Scripture requires us to judge of everything; then, indeed, you admit all that I am contending for, namely, that such a sincerity of opinion as

produces immoral actions is a wicked sincerity, and the ignorance from which it proceeds is a wicked ignorance. Indeed. ignorance on questions of religion, morals, and duty, are always more or less wicked. It is not meant to assert that ignorance in all cases is equally wicked: God alone is the Judge what means of better information have been neglected and abused, what talents have been thrown away. But ignorance, though not equally so, is, in all cases, sinful; for there is not a man upon earth that might not have known more of pure religion and sound morals, more of his duty to God and man and to himself, than he actually does know, if he had made the best use in his power of the means of information Providence had placed within his reach. And I may here add, that there is not a man upon earth who lives up to what he does know, and walks in all respects agreeably to his own rule. So that, what with the sin of having so little knowledge, and the equally heinous sin of not walking according to the little that we have, it is but a poor account that we could render to the Almighty if he were to enter into judgment with us.

A great deal of nonsense has been talked in this world about sincerity, and a man's being sincere in his opinions. But it often happens that the speakers know not what they mean by sincerity. With them, if you inquire after it, it proves to be a nonentity, a loose indefinite shadow, which it is impossible to grasp. Christian sincerity is, indeed, a noble, a magnificent idea. Christian sincerity means an earnest desire to know the will of God, a humble and a trembling fear lest it should be mistaken. The sincerity of a true Christian is the anxious longing of a duteous and affectionate child to learn his heavenly Father's will in all things, in order that he may please him in all obedience. It is a hungering and thirsting after conformity to the will of God. The habitual

posture of the sincere soul, is that of a creature saying to its Creator, Here I am, Lord; Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? This is the Christian's idea of sincerity. I do not mean to say that this is the state he always can attain. Alas! no, for "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that he cannot do the things that he would." But this is his notion of sincerity, and this is the state he endeavours to attain.

But sincerity with the world too often means careless ignorance, or wilful ignorance, of the will of God, through pride or the love of sin. It may be very convenient for a servant, when, from some sinister motive of his own, he is predetermined not to obey his master's will, to take care not to know it, and then to plead ignorance as an excuse, and to call it sincerity. But this excuse will not pass off with man, much less will it satisfy Him "to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom

no secrets are hid." It is strange that men are sensible of the fallacy in worldly concerns, and that they will not admit it for a moment; and yet they can build upon it an excuse, and a security that satisfies their consciences in the far more momentous concerns of Eternity. Men will not take the excuse, and yet they think that it is good enough for God.

It is plain, then, that the plea of sincerity is vain, since unbelief, or indeed wrong views of religion and morals, do not proceed from an innocent mistake in the head, but from a proud, perverse, careless, obstinate, wicked, and corrupt state of the heart. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their

eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

1st. That a man's belief and opinions on points of religion, morals, and duty are under the control of his will, in such a way and by the use of such means as render him responsible for them, and that he can help his opinions.

But I do not here assert that a wrong belief is a proper thing for man to punish. That is quite another affair: it is only asserted it is sinful, and that it is just in God to punish it. Lord Brougham, who has undoubtedly in many things an exceedingly powerful mind, has written somewhere a sentiment to this effect,—" It is to be hoped that the days are gone by when punishments or disabilities of any kind shall be laid upon men on account of their opinions and belief, which they can no more help than the colour of their skin."

In this sentiment there is a mixture of

truth and error. It is indeed very much to be doubted whether it is wise, or expedient, or even right, for human laws to punish or disqualify a man for holding a wrong belief, or wrong opinions, or even for publishing For, 1st, It is not a likely way to convince him, or to do him any good.—2d. It is not a likely way to suppress his opinions. Such is the nature of man, that persecution on account of opinions, or even the appearance of it, is far more likely to spread than to suppress them; therefore it will do no good to others. And lastly, once justify the principle of putting down opinions by the civil sword, and you sanction a power which is liable to be abused to the very worst purposes. Indeed, force is more likely to be employed in putting down sound arguments and sound reason, because they cannot be answered in any other manner. Besides, the proper instrument to correct the mischief of the press, is the press. And it is very hard if truth and reason, fairly and clearly stated, are not able single-handed to combat falsehood and error, without the assistance of the civil sword.

In the first part of Lord Brougham's sentiments, then, I agree; but the second part is all error and delusion; and the man, though a great man on many points, is here utterly in the dark, and knows not what he says, or whereof he affirms. It is utterly a mistake to assert that a man can no more help his opinions, and has no more power to change them than the Ethiopian the colour of his skin. I do not assert that he has an extempore power to shake off wrong opinions or belief by a single effort of the will. But, in the path of honesty, humility, real sincerity, a willingness to mortify pride and to deny the appetite, in patience, perseverance, and prayer, wrong opinions may be abandoned, and right opinions may be found. As for the helplessness above asserted, however great it may be, the man has brought it upon himself: he has got into one of those circles of evil (for all error is evil) which tend to increase for ever; he has blinded his eyes that he cannot see, and hardened his heart so that he cannot feel, and, from the very nature of the circle, they tend to become blinder and more blind: harder and more hard. Loving darkness rather than light, and sensual appetite, or self-idolatry, rather than self-denial, he has given himself over to a strong delusion to believe a lie, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" But the cannot here spoken of is not a physical impossibility, but a moral inability; an inability to love the light because he hates it. is a wicked inability, and is itself the very emphasis of his guilt; the very core and essence of his sin. But if he cannot enlighten his poor darkened mind by an effort of the will, let him begin with what he can do; let him practise stern and stalwart SELF-DENIAL. Let him suspect beforehand all those conclusions that tend to pamper pride, or to gratify the appetite, and, by the blessing of God on his prayers, and really sincere endeavours, he may get out of this circle of darkness and delusion into another circle, whose heavenly are is irradiated by the light of pure and undefiled religion, and by the true light of conscience and of reason; so that he may "see with his eyes and believe with his heart, and be converted and be healed!"

End of the digression.

I have considered the doctrine of the Almighty's everlasting circles in reference to faith, conscience, belief, and that decision of the judgment which forms our opinions. I shall now take up the subject more generally, and prove that the same doctrine holds with respect to every passion and affection of the soul that can be named.

Every affection and passion of the soul, whether good or evil, has a tendency to vent itself in the corresponding and appropriate

action of the body; and, on the other hand, every such action of the body strengthens and aggravates, and even generates, the passion from whence it sprung. Thus the effect becomes the parent of its cause. And when once the circle is begun, it is not easy to assign limits to the power it will acquire over the soul: for every repetition of the action more and more inflames its parent passion; and the passion thus inflamed more readily rushes into action, till the captive soul is hurried round in a vortex which at last she has now no power to resist. To illustrate this subject by all the examples furnished by the moral constitution of man, would form a theme almost inexhaustible: it can only be slightly touched upon.

It is well known that the passion of Anger, for instance, tends to vent itself in loud and angry words and gestures. It is equally well known that, whenever the courtesies of society, or the fear of consequences, or any sufficient motive, compels a man to suppress

the angry word or action, the rising passion is easily smothered in its birth, and in a few seconds leaves the man in calm self-posses-But, on the other hand, most men know, for most men have felt it, that the moment the angry word is uttered, that moment the blood boils, the passion is sevenfold inflamed, while the cheek is suffused with crimson, or deadly pale, according to the constitution of the individual. By frequent repetition this violence of temper will at last, in a fearful degree, acquire the mastery; for every time the angry passion vents itself in the angry word, the angry word more and more inflames the passion from whence it sprung; and the passion, thus inflamed, becoming still more impatient of restraint, rushes into more impetuous action, till it acquires a habit of indulgence, and the parent and the progeny generate and regenerate each other in one perpetual circle.

This accounts for those sallies of temper

to which many persons give way, under circumstances in which the above-mentioned restraints are not present to impose a timely check upon their indulgence. This will explain why the possession of uncontrolled authority, though sometimes necessary, is always very dangerous and corrupting to the heart of its possessor. Many a man of sufficient equanimity to carry him through ordinary circumstances, has suffered great injury in his heart and temper by the misfortune of possessing power over others, and being surrounded by those who trembled at his word. In this way we may understand how the system of slavery must fearfully deprave and corrupt the heart and morals of the citizens, in any state where that system prevails. If we consider the temptation to sudden acts of cruelty, and that every act of cruelty makes the soul more cruel, we must see that such a system is likely to breed thousands of human monsters among men who would otherwise have been no worse than ordinary citizens. Thus the bully at school, who afterwards becomes the holder of slaves, is not unlikely to end his life upon the gallows.

It is well worth our while to stop here and to observe, that this part of our subject suggests a certain and a perfect cure to every person who is afflicted with a hasty or violent temper, if he sincerely desires it. It is no uncommon thing for the father of a family, or one holding authority over others, to make his children or dependants miserable by the violence of his temper, and then to plead that it is his infirmity, and that he cannot help it. But he can help it; and if he will listen to me in sincerity, and as an honest man, I will show him how he can help it. Whenever he feels the angry passion or the hasty temper arise, he must instantly crucify it. Does he ask how he is to crucify it? The answer is to be found in the principle here laid down. Whenever the angry feeling kindles in his soul he

must refrain from giving it vent externally, either in word or deed. And in order that he may be enabled to refrain, he must immediately begin speaking words and performing actions of a directly opposite nature and tendency. By a vigorous effort of the will, he must instantly get into a circle of another kind; he must act a contrary part; and whatever he may feel, he must resolutely command the tongue to speak in the mildest, gentlest, kindest language that he can find words to utter. For although the feelings of the soul are not under the control of the will, the corresponding actions of the body and the utterance of the tongue most certainly are. Whenever, therefore, he feels angry or impatient, then especially is the time when he must resolutely determine to be more mild, and gentle, and kind in his exterior deportment than at any other time. And if the occasion be such that he feels it his duty to reprove or rebuke, he must defer it to a time when he is not angry to perform this duty. For, by his own confession, this impatient temper is his infirmity, his besetting sin; therefore it is his duty on these occasions strenuously to oppose it. It is his duty resolutely to close that lip that would speak the angry word, and to suffocate the rising passion in its birth; and to speak and act then, more than at all other times, directly contrary to its dictates. This is what St. Paul means by "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts." This is what the Gospel requires of him, no less than the rationale of our present argument.

But here, perhaps, the man will pretend to say, that to stifle the rising passion, and to assume a gentle exterior, is too hard a task for him, and more than he can perform. This is not true, for it is no more than he can and does perform every day of his life, whenever he has a sufficient motive. For, in the full burst of his angry passion, when the storm is at its height, only let a stranger come in whose good opinion he desires to

maintain, or a patron whom he respects and fears,—and in an instant all is calm and smiles! Now, if he will only do the same thing by a resolute effort of the will, and from a sense of duty to God and to himself, which he does through the fear of man, he will break the neck of the evil habit, he will crucify the sinful passion, and will obtain the victory as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

And lastly; this is by far the easiest course which is here recommended. For it is ten thousand times easier to break the neck of an evil habit,—to stifle and crucify a rising lust, by stirring up all the powers of the soul to act in the very teeth of its suggestions—than it is to dally and parley with it, and yet not to be overcome. But the plan here recommended, if resolutely persisted in, will succeed. Nor is this all;—the gentle exterior, the kind voice and manner, though at first only acted, will, by the law of the everlasting circles, become a part of the man's nature; they will generate the feelings

which at first they only imitated. Hence the great poet of nature said,—

"Assume a virtue, if you have it not,

For use can almost change the stamp of nature, And either curb the devil or throw him out With wondrous potency."

To assume a virtue for the purpose of deceiving others, is vile hypocrisy. But to strive to imitate any virtue for the purpose of delivering the soul from the tyranny of the opposite vice, is the only path which God will account sincerity, and the only conduct which he will bless with the influence of his healing power, as being the only evidence that we really desire that our infirmity may be healed.

But, above all, I have now to mention a mode of applying these principles which will succeed when all others fail. It is by having recourse to the grace of God and prayer, especially ejaculatory prayer at the

moment of the temptation. For what is the principle we have here laid down? suppress the angry feeling by calling to our aid feelings of another kind. Now-" God be merciful to me a sinner," said from the heart, will in a moment suppress every angry feeling, and will indeed call in feelings of another kind. If when the angry passion rises, the soul be instantly lifted up to God in ejaculatory prayer, this will act with irresistible power, and will smother the sinful feeling in its birth. For here is a double act of prayer and practical obedience at the same moment of time. Our prayer is proved to be sincere by a sincere effort of self-denial in the very act of utterance; and none but God need know what is passing in the heart; for no words are needful. oh! what a beautiful change in the soul is thus wrought in a moment: from a state of · anger against a fellow creature, to a state of deep humiliation before God! Moreover, the cure is certain, for the moment the heavenly feeling arises in the soul every earthly feeling will die away.

This is the powerful secret of ejaculatory prayer at the moment of temptation;—It in an instant snatches the soul out of a circle of all that is evil, into a circle of all that is holy and heavenly; -It includes an honest effort of sincere obedience in the very act of prayer; whereas a man may say his accustomed prayers morning and evening without one sincere effort against his besetting sin in the hour of temptation. But surely if a man prays without strenuously and resolutely using the means here laid down, and which are the only means at all to the purpose, his prayers will be accounted hypocrisy and mockery by Him who searcheth the heart, and God will not own them. But it is time to return more immediately to our subject.

Hatred, which is a passion different from the former, causes a man to brood over the occasions of his enmity, and continually to think of his enemy in connexion with these associations. But, on the other hand, every indulgence of such meditation inflames the enmity more and more, till, at last, the soul is hurried on to actions at which nature shudders, and which the man himself would once have conceived utterly impossible.

The same may be said of lust, which seeks its impure gratification, while every such gratification exceedingly inflames the sinful passion from whence it sprung.

Drunkenness is a horrible illustration of the principle we are now considering. Drunkenness is both a disease of the body and a sin of the soul, and it produces effects both upon the body and the soul, which aggravate more and more the causes from whence they sprung. The wretched drunkard after a debauch feels a sinking of the soul, and a prostration of all the bodily powers, which are perfect misery, and which drive him to seek relief in the very thing which is the cause of all this misery. The

relief afforded is transient, and the remedy again appears in its true character as the fatal cause, and again produces its horrible effects in increased intensity. This process goes on, the cause continually aggravating the effect, and the effect the cause, till at last there is a sensation of horror in the soul, a gnawing in the vitals, a raging, burning desire in the very seat of life, which is stronger than death, and more insatiable than the grave; and which is the nearest resemblance which earth affords of the gnawing of that worm which never dies, and the burning of that fire which is never quenched. Of all the circles of evil into which man can get, this is the most horrible and the most hopeless. It partakes of the twofold character of disease of the body. and damnation to the soul. It hurries its helpless victim continually into a deeper and a deeper hell. In some instances, he has been persuaded, beyond all powers of persuasion to the contrary, that he has been actually in hell while still in the land of the living; and dying in this state, it perhaps will be for ever impossible for him to say whether hell itself to him began on this side of the grave or the other.

Thus it appears that evil once sown in the heart contains within itself the principle of perpetual increase; and that it does not increase for ever in this world, is owing to the restraint of God's providence and grace. If it were not for these, man can see no assignable limit to its increase. And what evil may hereafter become in eternity, in that world where these restraints are withdrawn for ever, is perhaps a more dreadful tale than tongue can tell, or imagination can conceive.

But let us now turn to the more pleasing side of the picture, and consider this law of the "cause and effect mutually increasing each other," as it concerns the good affections of the soul.

Love, for instance, is an active, ardent,

generous passion, never satisfied except it can show itself in its corresponding actions; producing towards our Creator constant, willing, delighted obedience, and towards our fellow-creatures every act of kindness and gentleness; every endeavour to please the object of our love. Both branches of this subject powerfully illustrate the principles under consideration, and furnish matter of practical instruction of the very last importance to the happiness of man. Love, genuine love, whether towards God or man, is a master-passion, inspiring the very thoughts of the heart, and directing the conduct of the life. Thus genuine love leads the soul to meditate continually upon the beloved object. No other thought is half so dear, so welcome; so that if the soul. through other cares and occupations, has been led away from her beloved object, she is anxious to return again to her rest as Noah's dove to the ark, for all else seems a dreary waste. Our great national poet has

thus described the symptoms of an undissembled affection.*

"Unstaid and fickle in all other things,
Save in the constant image of the object lov'd."

But, on the other hand, it is no less certain that much thinking upon the object greatly increases our love of it. Meditation feeds the flame of love; and thus while love fills the soul with a certain train of thought, the indulgence of these thoughts fans the flame of love, and inspires the very passion from whence they emerge. On this principle, Wilberforce beautifully proves the duty of thinking much upon God, and entertaining him upon the soul; calling up thoughts of him continually; meditating upon his glorious perfections, upon his mercy, goodness, truth, and holiness; till at last the soul comes to love him with the most ardent affection. For although love itself is not directly under the command of

[•] See Wilberforce's Practical Christianity.

the will, yet a resolute discipline of the mind can summon and bid such thoughts into the soul, as, by the grace of God, shall end in love.

Again, we have said that genuine love leads to active and willing obedience, and compels a man to seek to please the object of his love. But, on the other hand, it is no less true, that if a man sets himself in earnest to obey God, and strives to please him in all his ways, such a course of conduct will sooner or later kindle the most ardent love of God in his bosom. This is its natural tendency. It is the means which God has appointed for the end, and which he will sooner or later meet with that Holy Spirit, which will shed abroad the love of God in his heart. But faith, too, is a principle in this heavenly circle, for "faith worketh by love and overcometh the world." Love is the offspring of faith and the parent of obedience, while every act of gospelobedience increases and strengthens our

humility and faith. These again more and more inflame our love, which proves its growth and vigour by more active and more devoted obedience. Here is a celestial circle which will expand for ever, till faith is lost in sight, and perfect and holy love delights herself for ever in pure and sinless obedience.

We will now take the other branch of the subject, namely, love to a fellow-creature, to illustrate the principle under consideration. Love as its cause, produces every act of kindness and gentleness, and every effort to please, as the natural and necessary effect. But, on the other hand, these actions and this course of conduct increase the intensity of our love. This will partly account for the intensity of a mother's love. Undoubtedly, the mother's love is founded in the natural instinct: but the anxiety of a mother's care and watchfulness, her countless acts of tenderness, her personal sacrifices, and acts of self-denial, that she may attend

to her helpless babe; all these exceedingly increase that love which nature had implanted in her bosom. Thus a mother's love produces a mother's conduct, while a mother's conduct immensely increases a mother's love. Whereas a mother, who, from any reason whatever, neglects her child, soon comes to have comparatively very little love for it. The same principle might be illustrated by every other species of love which fills the human bosom.

It has been objected that love is a passion not under the command of the will, and therefore that the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," is impracticable. But we will take a stronger case than this in our Lord's command—"But I say unto you, love your enemies." To this command it has been objected—"If love be not obedient to the will, so that a man cannot love any object in a moment at the bidding of the will, much less can he love his enemies. Therefore, to the generality of mankind, this

command has appeared absolutely impossi-But our Lord, in giving the command, has, at the very same time, given us directions how we may obey it. For he says, "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." And the Apostle says—"If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." Now this line of conduct steadily persevered in towards your enemy (in obedience to Christ's command.) will as surely produce love, genuine love, even towards our bitterest enemy, as that God himself has established the laws of our constitution. For this process is one of the Almighty's everlasting circles. I will illustrate this by an extreme case; I will suppose that I have an enemy whom I cordially hate, and that I am wandering on the fields at eventide, not as Isaac did to meditate upon God, but to brood over my hatred, and to meditate upon the injuries I have received. All at

once I hear the cry of distress: I run towards the place and find my enemy drowning. For a moment the voice of nature prevails; I forget my enmity, and see only a fellow-creature drowning. Under the impulse of this feeling I save his life. I will not stop to inquire what effect this adventure will have upon him, because it forms no part of my present subject. St. Paul says, it will "heap coals of fire upon his head." But of this I am sure, that it will put me in a position with respect to my enemy entirely new, which will go far towards extinguishing my hatred, and perhaps will generate in my bosom love towards him. And if he be not of sterner mould than mankind in general, it is likely that this scene will be the cause of our reconciliation. and the beginning of a lasting friendship between us. This is an extreme case, and the effect produced is instantaneous; but a long course of assiduous kindness towards an enemy will still more certainly produce

the same effect. Thus when God gave the command, "Thou shalt love thine enemies," he did not give the command without at the same time furnishing the means, and showing us how we might obey it.

But the principle here intended to be brought to practise is universal, and applies to every feeling of the heart, and every action of the life. The feeling of the soul is not under the control of the will, but its corresponding action is; and this is our part and duty to perform. Belief and love, for instance, are neither of them under the control of the will; and this has been objected to those commands "Thou shalt believe," and "thou shalt love." But patiently striving to persevere in that conduct and all those actions which would proceed from faith and love, will sooner or later kindle these feelings in the soul. Thus, if a man cannot force an entrance into one part of this wonderful circle, he can at another; and if he perseveres in occupying any one part of it, then (as God

is true and faithful) it will surely come to pass, that his blessing on the laws of our nature, which he himself has established, will carry the man round the whole circumference.

It is upon this principle rightly understood, and on none other, that it is possible to reconcile to man's comprehension what is said about prayer. How many great and precious promises are made to fervent prayer! But to this it might be objected, that prayer is a state of the heart; it is not the mere utterance of the lips: therefore prayer itself is as much the gift of the Spirit as the blessings for which we are desired to pray. The heart must be renewed before a man can really pray. The thing is supposed done, in order to obtain the means of doing it. How are we to reconcile this apparent absurdity? If it were a question within the range of man's works and machinery, it would be an absurdity never to be reconciled. But not so the Almighty's everlasting circles! By persevering in trying to pray, by continuing in all those actions which a praying man performs, the blessing of God will meet him, and the very spirit of prayer itself will be kindled in his soul. The Christian's reason for praying is because God had commanded him to pray, and promised a blessing. And this would be a sufficient warrant for him even if he could not explain all the difficulties that might be started on the subject. But still it is delightful to be able to prove that the Gospel is agreeable to sound philosophy, nay more, that it is itself the soundest philosophy in the world.

The subject before us thoroughly understood, and viewed in all its bearings, will serve to remove a strange and mischievous delusion, with which many sincere and pious persons have bewildered and confused their understandings, and which has held them back from heartily assisting in the combined efforts to do good, that abound in the present day. They start with a maxim excel-

lent and valuable in itself; but out of it they deduce a mischievous fallacy, and a miserable delusion. They say, "It is not enough to reform the outward conduct, more attention should be paid to the state of the heart, to persuade men to have their hearts right before God." Now, if these persons really meant no more than to say, "It is not enough to reform the outward conduct; we must not stop here, nor rest satisfied till the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost and by faith in the Saviour," in this we would cordially join, and subscribe with all our hearts. But the persons I am speaking of, do mean more than this, and carry it on to a miserable and mischievous delusion. They say, "Societies for the suppression of vice, temperance societies, for example, are human means and carnal instruments at best: they only tend to reform the outward conduct, but they do not convert the heart, and therefore we set no great value upon them, and little care to render

them our assistance." Now the whole of this reasoning is a wretched delusion. For, in the first place, even if it were true that they only tended to suppress vice and reform the outward conduct, and had no gospel influence upon the heart, still it is the Christian's duty to put down sin by all and every means in his power, and by every innocent contrivance he can possibly devise. As to saying that they are mere human instruments, this is talking nonsense. constraining love of Christ is the motive which sets the Christian thinking how he can possibly do good; but as for the means or moral machinery best suited to accomplish the end in view, he employs his reason to devise these. He knows that this is the very purpose for which God gave him the gift of reason, to be employed in his Master's service in contriving ways of doing good to . man. And he knows that if he does not thus employ the talent entrusted to him, he will be accounted a wicked servant in the

day that he must give up his stewardship, and render an account of the talents committed to his care.

But, in the second place, (and what is more directly to the purpose of our present argument,) it is not true that these institutions reform the outward conduct, but have no tendency to produce any corresponding change upon the soul.—This assertion is utterly false, and contrary to the laws of our nature which God himself has established. All those institutions which prevail upon men to "cease to do evil" and to "learn to do well," even with respect to particular vices, do tend to improve the heart, and put it in the way of receiving God's blessing. Thus Temperance Societies, which have persuaded thousands to forsake the ale-house, and to sit under the preaching of the Gospel, have powerfully operated in a twofold manner to improve the heart as well as to regulate the conduct. For if a man be prevailed upon to abandon the

habits of the drunkard, and to do the actions of the kind husband and the tender father, he will soon come to feel the feelings of a kind husband and a tender father. he be persuaded to pursue the conduct, and to use the means, of a man who desires to become acquainted with his God, he will soon come really to desire it. And now he is brought upon the meeting ground, where God has promised sooner or later to meet them that seek his face. By striving merely to do the external actions of one who would. love God, seek his face, and obey his commandments, he has entered upon one of those circles, the laws of which are the very fiat of the Almighty himself, and, if he persevere in it, God will sooner or later meet him with his Holy Spirit, and carry him round the whole circumference.

We have now closed the subject so far as concerns opinions, and belief, faith, religion, the graces of the soul, and the passions of the heart. But I have said that the doctrine

of the Almighty's everlasting circles is also true in politics, in political economy, in the causes of the wealth of nations and of the rise and fall of empires. The Scriptures tell us, that as "righteousness exalteth a nation," so "sin is a reproach to any people;" and that iniquity will be their ruin. Now a nation may get involved in any of these circles, either of good or of evil, and may be carried round in the vortex, the effect increasing the cause, and the cause the effect, for ever, full as surely as an individual. To go into the details of this vast and extensive subject, and to enumerate all the instances in which a principle, either of good or of evil, at work within a state, cannot fail to produce effects which will aggravate in a tenfold degree the principle by which they were generated, would far exceed the limits of this paper. I shall only observe generally, that as a mortal disease on the natural body produces symptoms which fearfully increase the dis-

order from whence they spring, and cause it again to produce the former symptoms on a still greater aggravation, so in like manner mortal disease in the body politic, public corruption and profligacy in the State cannot fail to produce such effects, and to work such changes upon the morals of the people as will exceedingly increase the corruption and the profligacy from whence they spring. And it matters not whether the corruption originate with the government or with the people, for these two will mutually corrupt and re-corrupt each other in one perpetual circle. We have seen that immoral practice sears the conscience of the individual: and that the conscience thus seared, is prepared for the perpetration of still deeper crime. But the same thing is true, if possible, in a still more fearful degree with respect to the morals of the nation. Past history has given terrible proof to what an extent public profligacy and crime can sear the national conscience, and lower the tone of public

virtue and public morals; till the depressed standard of public opinion has encouraged still greater villainy, and at last, vice has even found an advocate in the public voice, and crimes have been perpetrated without shame, and in the face of day, and even boasted of, in one age and nation which must not even be named in another. The state of Rome in the days of her Emperors, and the subsequent decay and fall of the Roman empire, would furnish abundant examples of state corruption, and public profligacy, and utter want of virtue among the people, producing effects upon every department of that mighty empire, and upon all ranks and orders of the citizens, which never ceased to aggravate the evil principle from whence they derived their birth, and made "corruption still more corrupt," and caused her again to reproduce a still more hideous progeny. Thus the whole state and commonwealth, both government and people, became so utterly

corrupt, that the mighty empire founded by Rome in her virtuous days would no longer hold together, by reason of her own corruption, and became an easy prey to the Scythian, the Vandal, and the Goth.

We may here observe, that this part of our subject still further pursued, will illustrate the Scripture observation, that "one sinner destroyeth much good," and that one righteous man may even save a city. man can with certainty foretell all the possible consequences of a single action, when viewed in all its bearings and connexions to the end of time. A word spoken in season in a humble cottage, or a sentiment published in a penny tract, may put a circle in operation which shall expand continually till it embraces the whole world within the sphere of its influence. But these subjects are boundless, and their ramifications far too numerous to be attempted here. I shall therefore dismiss them, and give one example of the circle from the political complexion

of the present day, and with it conclude this paper.

The disputes of the present day, while "the many" are struggling for political power, furnish matter to illustrate our present doctrine. One party declares that " free institutions and a liberal Government form an intelligent and a thinking people." Another party says,-" No! it is an intelligent and a thinking people that must form a liberal Government, and enact free institutions. Neither is it wise or expedient to give perfect political liberty to a people that is not ripe for it. Liberty, so far from being a blessing, is a curse to a nation that is not ' able to bear it;' for the people are unable either to estimate or use it aright, and the result will be anarchy, confusion, and misery." But the other party rejoins—" If you do not give the people political liberty and free institutions, they will never become a thinking and intelligent people. You are waiting for

that which will never take place, for you are withholding the very means by which it is to be accomplished." Thus the two parties are disputing which is the cause and which is the effect. And both have reason on their side; for it is the very nature of the Almighty's everlasting circles, to render it impossible for man to pronounce with confidence which is the cause and which is the effect. In the present dispute it may, in a sense, be said, that both parties are wrong, and both parties are right; for if an intelligent people enact free laws and institutions, these very laws and institutions will make the people continually more and more intelligent; and the expanded intelligence of the people will make still further improvement upon the laws, and these improvements will again expand the nation's mind: so that, in the present dispute, either principle may be taken indifferently, either for the cause or the effect; for they act, and act again

alternately upon each other, in one everexpanding and everlasting circle.

It is utterly foreign to my present essay, to meddle with politics; but the subject before us seems to suggest,—

1st. That it is the duty of every Government to give to the people as much liberty as they are "able to bear," and,—

2nd. That, if it be shown that any useful measure can be adopted, equally safe and equally well, by the power either of the prince or by the representatives of the people, it is far better that it should be adopted by the people: first, because it will be far more efficient in practice; secondly, because the very adoption will expand the people's mind; and thirdly, because one does not see why the mind, any more than the body, should be kept in leading-strings any longer than is necessary. Indeed, the Bible precepts are the only leading strings which the soul can never outgrow. And happy is that

nation, or that people, which grows continually more and more teachable, more and more like a little child under this heavenly teaching, through the whole period of its existence. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the author and finisher of all real excellence in the human mind. For in more immediate reference to the present subject, it may be asked, with what safe preparation are the people ever to enter the CIRCLE above described. the very entrance to which is considered by one party to be highly dangerous, and perhaps, with justice so considered? The answer is, that pure religion, and sound morals, and public virtue, are the only safe preparation; for public liberty without public virtue is a shadow! a name! or rather, it is a phantom-light borne in the darkness of midnight, over a morass which will swamp all order, peace, happiness, and all that man holds dear.

On the other hand, if the *heart* of the nation be in the *right place*, the people may be safely trusted, for the understanding will not materially err.

On this account, institutions to reform the morals of the nation are the safest preparations for political reform; and on this principle I assert that Temperance Societies, little as their value is yet understood, are out of all comparison the most important political reformers of the present day. other reforms are mere trifling, mere child's play, compared to the moral grandeur, the beauty, the sound practical utility of this If this reform succeed, it will secure the practical working of all other reforms, and they may all be useful in their place and measure. But if the people of England suffer the Temperance reform to come to naught, and intemperance increase, as heretofore, upon the land, it will bring in its train vice, and misery, and every crime that can be named: all other

reforms will fail, for public profligacy and public crime will be a blight, a curse, a blister, and mildew on them all.*

* Re-printed from the "Oriental Christian Spectator," with notes and additions from the Author's Manuscripts.

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS BELIEF.

IN REPLY TO PHILALETHES.

Sir,

In the last number of your periodical, I observed a reply to that part of my paper on the "Almighty's Everlasting Circles," which I deemed it expedient to introduce in the form of a digression, because, although it was a closely kindred subject, yet it was not, strictly speaking, a part of the subject itself. In this part of my paper, Philalethes has totally mistaken my meaning in three very essential particulars, or I am persuaded he would not have asserted that the reasoning was "inconsequential," or that I did not "understand the principles of sound

philosophy." But since I have been misunderstood, I am entitled by courtesy to explain my meaning. It is not necessary here to inquire, whether it was my fault in having expressed myself obscurely, or whether the fault rests with Philalethes in not having given himself the trouble to understand my meaning before he criticised my paper. For, even on the first supposition (that the fault was mine), I am entitled by courtesy to explain myself. But it is not my intention to plead guilty of obscurity before I have been tried at the bar of public opinion. I shall in the present paper,

1st. Show the three points in which Philaethes has mistaken my meaning.

2nd. Explain the reason why I expressed myself in the manner I did.

And here I beg to observe, that I should not have presumed to occupy the pages of a public periodical in justifying myself or my expressions, if it had not been that the reply of Philalethes tends to throw discredit over a paper in which subjects are discussed of far more importance than my humble reputation as a writer.

I regret, Mr. Editor, that I am constrained to trespass upon your pages with a longer paper than I could wish. But it is unavoidable, as a string of objections may be strung together within a very small space; whilst fully to reply to every one of them in order, must necessarily occupy a much larger paper.

The first of the three points in which Philalethes has totally mistaken my meaning, discovers itself in the following passage:

"It thus appears that the writer's alleged proof of a man's belief being under the control of his will, rests on two assumptions—the truth of the Scriptures, and the corruption of the human heart as affirmed in the Scriptures.

"But although this mode of reasoning may be perfectly legitimate when addressed to a believer, still it cannot be said to rest on principles of sound philosophy, &c." Now the whole of the above is founded on a misconception of my meaning; for I beg to state, that nothing could be further from my intention than to bring forward Scripture as a philosophical proof of any one of my positions. I most cordially agree with Philalethes, that a quotation from Scripture is not a philosophical proof, nor, strictly speaking, any proof at all. It is an authoritative declaration. And Philalethes is correct in asserting that it has no weight at all with those who do not admit the authority of Scripture, though it has very great weight with myself: and I bless God that I have reason to believe that it has also very great weight with the majority of readers.

But I admit that this last fact, however grateful it may be to the feelings of my heart, is nothing at all to the point of the argument; and I perfectly agree with Philaelthes, that to quote Scripture as a philosophical proof, betrays an ignorance of the principles of philosophical reasoning. But

I never dreamt of doing anything of the kind: and if Philalethes will take the trouble of studying my paper a little more attentively, he will find that my language will not bear any such construction. dividing my argument under three heads, and promising a philosophical proof of each, before entering upon the argument I have these words: "In the first place," Scripture stands committed on the subject, &c. Now this is an ellipsis of speech; but it is a perfectly legitimate one; and according to the genius and idiom of the English language it means this—" Before I enter upon my argument I will first premise the opinion of Scripture upon this subject;" if I had intended to enter at once into the main argument, and had really proposed Scripture as the substance of that argument, the expression "in the first place" would have been downright bad English: for, according to the genius of the English language, this expression "in the first place," as it stands

in that connexion, postpones the main argument. At the same time this little prelude. alluding to the threats and promises of Scripture upon "belief or unbelief," knowledge and ignorance, moral light or darkness. while it did not in the least disturb the plan of the arrangement to those who chose to be at the pains to understand it, was not without its practical utility; because there are numbers of readers who love the Scriptures, and their hearts are predisposed to feel an interest in any argument which professes to prove what Scripture has already asserted, and therefore has Scripture on its Indeed many do so love the word of God, and are so accustomed to consider it as their first standard, that they feel little interest in any discussion on moral subjects, however ingenious it may be, except so far as it may have a bearing upon Scripture. And even the unbeliever has no reasonable ground to find fault with the prelude stating the opinion of Scripture; because the phi-

losophical proof which follows, stands or falls by its own merit, and would not be in the least affected by it even if the Scriptures were proved to be false. And surely it is practically useful to introduce matter that shall be pleasing and convincing to every variety of mind: the scriptural view to interest and convince the religious mind; the philosophical argument (or that part which I humbly think is argument) to convince the exclusively philosophic mind; and the whole of it to convince and please the mind which is both religious and philosophical. And if I have at least honestly endeavoured to write one part expressly to interest the Philosopher, he has no reason to grudge the Christian that part which is nearest and dearest to his affections and the feelings of his heart; and to say the least, it would hardly have been right for a minister of religion, in discussing a subject embracing both religion and morals, to have passed over the opinion of Scripture altogether.

The allusion then to Scripture was ne intended for the philosophical proof. T which I intended for the proof is oper in the beginning of the first paragra commencing with these words: this plausible reasoning would be all v true, if man were a being consisting sol of intellect," &c. And it is founded, upon any assumption of the truth of Sci ture, nor of the corruption of the hun heart as revealed in Scripture, but upon pathology of the human mind; and fa connected with it familiar to the experie of all, such, as—that men like to cons their own ease and inclinations, and v easily persuade themselves to believe t they may lawfully do that which they: a strong inclination to do, or leave und that which they are inclined to leave undo When the appetites and the passions ask advice and opinion of the judgment upo point upon which they have pretty v made up their determination, they cons their sage adviser, wishing only to strengthen their predetermined opinion.

This is the principle of the argument which contends that the judgment is more or less misled in all matters in which the heart and passions are concerned. But it is not fully developed till the last paragraph of the same page, where I endeavour to explain particularly how it is that the appetites and passions bewilder the judgment. I will however candidly confess, that in the latter part of the first paragraph I again allude to Scripture in these words: "Therefore the Scriptures refer unbelief to an evil heart," &c. But surely any attentive reader must perceive, that this reference to Scripture in the context and connexion on which it stands is introduced to show that the philosophic argument (supposing it to be sound reasoning) confirms the declarations of Scripture on this subject, and is not intended to bring forward Scripture to prove the philosophic argument; and my reason for introducing Scripture here was, because although believers all receive the authority of Scripture in the first instance, simply by faith, yet many of them take delight in seeing Scripture proved to be agreeable to sound philosophy. To these persons this kind of argument, if it be well conducted, is a "feast of reason," and so appeals to their affections, that they do not heartily enjoy any philosophical moral argument that has not some such application; as it appears to them unprofitable and unimportant, if it cannot in any way be brought to bear upon the interior of the Scriptures and the final destination of man, as therein revealed. Even viewing these things only as a matter of taste, courtesy allows each individual the indulgence of his own taste, provided it does not injure another

2nd. But as to the question whether the part which I did intend for argument as philosophic proof, or not, I will defer entering upon it, till I first explain the two remaining points on which Philalethes has mistaken my meaning. He evidently understands me to mean, to apply the reasoning and the remarks upon belief to religious belief only; and it is this impression upon his mind that causes the chief part of the offensiveness of the treatise. Now this is so far from being my meaning, that religious belief or unbelief is only one department of the immense and inexhaustible variety of the subjects I meant to embrace. I meant to include the whole range of human opinions—belief in religion—opinion in morals, in politics, in government. I took great pains to give the expression a triple form, and to make it more general and universal; I further added these words: "so indeed any moral proposition in which the appetite, or self-indulgence, or self-denial are implicated." For out of the whole range of human science, I only excluded those questions of "abstract, mathematical science, in which the heart has no concern, which point

to no painful duty to be done, no favourite sin to be overcome, no self-denial of any kind." And I excluded these because I at once admitted the objector's theory of belief and opinion to be quite correct in these cases; because in these the judgment alone sits upon the judgment-seat, and the heart, and the passions, and the appetites do not interfere, but allow the unbiased judgment to decide.

This explanation will, I am persuaded, remove at once his objections to that part of the Essay which is most offensive to Philalethes. The part at which he particularly takes offence is the following: "He hath given himself over to a strong delusion to believe a lie, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Now when Philalethes is informed to what I meant principally to allude in this passage, so far from being angry, I am persuaded he will cordially agree with me, and come forward and take me by the hand on

this subject. When Queen Mary could persuade herself that it was her duty to burn her Protestant subjects at the stake, is it too much to say that she had given herself over to a strong delusion to believe a lie? History accuses Queen Mary of being a bigot, not of being a hypocrite. Now supposing that history is correct, and that Mary was sincere in her opinions, can this fact be better, or more beautifully and powerfully expressed, than by saying "that she had given herself over to a strong delusion to believe a lie," so that she could not deliver her soul, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" When the Hindoo can persuade himself that it is his duty to assist in burning his widowed mother alive, to drown his daughters, to hang himself upon hooks, to main and cripple his limbs, to crush himself to death under the car of Jugganáth, to worship a stone or a trunk of a tree bedaubed with red, as a proper representation of Jehovah, the Creator of the universe—is

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it too much to say that he has given himself over to a strong delusion to believe a lie?

If Philalethes had been better acquainted with that Scripture which he undervalues, he would have perceived the wide range of my subject, and would have known that these things were included within the compass of the expression which gave him so much offence: for the words which he dislikes so much are not mine, they are taken from the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, the 19th and 20th verses; and they are expressly on the subject of idolatry. The entire passage is as follows: "And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul,

nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" To my judgment this is a beautiful and powerful passage, and exquisitely adapted to express the delusions of the human mind, in consequence of the manifold and various workings of the heart and passions.

The reason why Philalethes took offence, is because by misunderstanding my meaning he limited the vast range of my object to a narrow compass, and tied it down to one particular point, which to him is offensive. And yet I actually enumerated a vast variety of instances, in almost every department of human action, to illustrate my meaning. I will instance the following part which Philalethes seems to have overlooked: "The persecutors of the primitive Christians bound children and tender virgins to the stake, and burnt with fire mothers of living children yet unborn."

For these monsters we have the compendious apology that they thought that they were right. But religious persecutions are not the only difficulties the case presents. In feudal struggles for power, wars for glory, nay, under the staid and sober plea of preserving social order and obedience to the laws, acts of murder, robbery, and bloodshed have been perpetrated, and the perpetrators have been so convinced that they were right, that they would have been perfectly astonished if you had suggested the possibility that they might be wrong. Here, then, is a ready apology for all the crime that has been sincerely committed in the world. For once admit the principle, and you cannot It is impossible to draw the line. You cannot judge of a man's sincerity. indeed you judge of a man's sincerity by the tendency of his opinions and the moral quality of his actions as you would of a tree by its fruit, and as common sense, as well as Scripture, requires us to judge of everything, then, indeed, you admit all that I am contending for; namely, that such a sincerity of opinions as produces immoral actions is a

wicked sincerity, and the ignorance from which it proceeds is a wicked ignorance.

With the above enumeration of a vast range of subjects, moral, political, civil and military, I am at a loss to understand why Philalethes limited my meaning to that one point which seems to have given him such great offence—viz. belief or unbelief in matters of religion.

A third point in which Philalethes has sadly mistaken my meaning, is in supposing that I intended in the beginning to prove more than even I myself professed to have proved in the end, and that I introduced the word "indirectly" afterwards, only because I wanted to patch up an attempt in which I had failed.

Now I beg to assure Philalethes, that I never intended from the first to prove more than this, "that a man's opinions and belief are under the control of his will, in such a mode and manner as is sufficient to render him responsible to God for them."

It is very true, that in the "thesis," as he terms it. I have set down the naked, "unguarded" words, "that a man is responsible for his belief, and that he can help his opinions;" but let Philalethes look candidly to the context and connexion in which these words stand. Let him look to the bearing of the argument in hand. For what is the proposition I am endeavouring to combat? It is this—"That a wrong belief in religion, or mischievous opinions in morals, are innocent, provided a man sincerely entertains them; and that they are not proper subjects of reward and punishment, because they are not under the control of his will, and that a man cannot help his opinions." opposing this proposition, I assert that a man's opinions and belief are under the control of his will, so that a wrong belief in religion, or mischievous opinions in morals, are a proper subject of rewards and punishments: I admit that here again there is an ellipsis of speech, and that it might have

been expanded out into more words. what does it fairly mean in the connexion in which it stands? It means that a man's opinions and belief are under the control of his will in such a manner and degree as to meet the philosophical objection I have endeavoured to meet, and to render wrong opinions guilty, and a man responsible to God for them. This is all that is necessary to my present argument, and beyond this I have no wish to prove any more. This is all that I ever intended to prove. And I feel assured that Philalethes will not doubt my accuracy, though he may undervalue my judgment, when I assure him that I paused for some minutes with my pen in hand, and debated with myself, whether or not I should introduce the word "indirectly" into the original "thesis," as he terms it. And the reason that I decided not to introduce it was, because the bare word would not, after all, explain my full meaning standing in that connexion; and it appeared to my judgment that it would come in more kindly afterwards, when the context and the more matured state of the argument would explain my exact meaning in using it.

Let us now calmly inquire, whether or not I have proved that a man's belief and opinions are so far under the control of his will as that he is responsible to God for them. My argument is this. The great Locke has proved that the human mind can entertain but one idea at one time, and that ideas supply each other's place in the mind in perpetual succession. Now, I argue, that when a man sets himself to determine upon any point of religion, or morals, or duty, or any question involving self-indulgence, or self-denial, a vast variety of thoughts and reasons will present themselves on both sides of the question, some for good and some for evil, some tending to lead, and some to mislead him. Now, as these cannot all be present to the mind at once, but can only be entertained one at a

time-appetite, inclination, or the passions, make reason an unjust judge, by fixing the attention principally-upon those views and arguments which tend to their own indulgence, and rooting them in the memory; whilst they keep opposite views and arguments out of sight, or hurry the mind away from them, thus blinding the reason, and stifling the still small voice of conscience. Now this will take place in that degree and proportion in which the appetites and passions have been indulged throughout life, and according as the appetites have or have not acquired the mastery over the moral powers of the soul. So that a life of selfindulgence on the one hand, or self-denial on the other, will make all the difference in the world in a man's view of the same moral evidence.

Again, a life of inordinate self-conceit, so that a man worships the intellectual strength of his own understanding, will exceedingly prostrate the real strength even of an under-

standing that would, but for this, have been of a high order. For this reason it is that Solomon says, "Seest-thou a man that is wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."* Now, a previous life of habitual self-denial keeping down the solicitation of the appetites; or a life of habitual humility and modesty, listening with deference to the opinions of others, and a readiness to learn even from the humblest person, and above all, humility in the presence of God-all these things discipline the mind, clear away pride, passion, appetite, self-conceit and error, and immensely increase its powers of judging soberly of itself and the things presented to its consideration. Thus the ultimate

^{*} I have introduced this quotation in the same kind of connexion that I introduced the former one. Therefore, the "Scriptures attribute unbelief to an evil heart." The word "therefore," in its former connexion, means, "Hence we may see the reason why the Scripture says, &c. &c.: "so here I have not introduced Solomon to prove the argument, but the argument to illustrate the truth of Solomon.

opinions formed (as I have already said) depend upon "that series of voluntary actions" which constitute a man's previous habits, though "not upon one solitary effort of the will." Surely these last words ought to have explained my meaning. There is satisfactory evidence to every fair mind of the sense in which I intended to prove my assertion. Now what is the ultimate conclusion as to the moral responsibility consequent upon this kind of control? Suppose two different events, the final issues of which are both under the control of my will, but in these two different modes. One event depends upon one solitary effort of the will, so that I can command the issue at once. The other event depends upon a long series of actions, each of which taken one by one is voluntary, in the common acceptation of the term, and for which I am as responsible as for any of the actions of my life. Surely in both cases I am responsible to God for the final issues.

But the proposition here contended for is familiar to the experience of all mankind, "that the views of the judgment are universally modified by the heart, the passions, and the appetites." Hence the trite, yet pithy old saying,

"He that's convinced against his will Is of the same opinion still."

And it is not only true in morals: it is equally true that a man's view of religion, and eternity, and the soul, are exceedingly changed when a change of circumstances places worldly things in a different position with respect to the appetite and the passions. Thus an argument either against revelation or in favour of the appetites, shall seem to a man to-day quite unanswerable, while in the full enjoyment of health and reputation, and with the world before him; but to-morrow, let an unforeseen accident, or sudden attack of disease, bring him to the borders of the grave and the confines of eternity, and the same argument seems to

him so weak and silly, that he wonders how he could have been the dupe of it. It is freely admitted here, that in the class of diseases where the head is affected and the understanding weakened in any degree, no fair inference can be drawn. But I have seen some cases of disease remote from the head, eminently the reverse of this. I have attended on death-beds from rapid consumption, in which the understanding has been not only not impaired, but exceedingly clear, and powerful, and collected, far beyond its ordinary state. In these cases it has sometimes happened that the appetites and passions being silenced, and the importance of worldly honours and pleasures having dwindled into nothing, the judgment of the dving man has so changed, that what once seemed to him unanswerable wisdom. now seems exquisite folly; what once seemed to be light, now seems darkness: and the man once wise in his own conceit, now seems to himself to have been all his life a

fool and a madman, even though he may still retain the reputation of a clever man in the eyes of others. So differently is the same evidence weighed by the understanding when pride is humbled and the passions silenced.

I have now explained my meaning as to the points in which I have been misunderstood. And as an author is fairly supposed to know best what he himself meant, I trust that Philalethes will have the candour to take this, my own commentary, as a key to my own meaning, and study this paper over again, and I am persuaded that he will perceive that it is based upon sound philosophy, and that there is matter contained in "The Almighty's Everlasting Circles" to feed the mind of the philosopher.

I admit that there is a religious tone pervading the whole of it. But it would have been indecent and unbecoming the character of a minister of religion, if it had been otherwise. And surely a sound philosopher ought not to be so prejudiced against Revelation as to hate the Essay on that account, when its fundamental arguments are not based upon Revelation, but upon sound Philosophy!

I am sorry that I have been obliged to make this reply so long, but every objector stands upon vantage ground, for (as I have observed) it is an easy matter to string together a number of objections within a very small compass; whereas, to take these objections one by one, and give a full reply to each, is a laborious task.

I have now only room shortly to mention the reasons why I did not explain myself more minutely, and why I expressed myself as I did.

For this I had two reasons. First, because I think that a thing may be over-explained, and that, by trying to make it over-clear, it sometimes becomes obscure by the mere "copia verborum."

Secondly, because I think it a bad com-

pliment to the understanding of my readers to enter into a laboured detail of every minute point in the argument. It seemed to me far more elegant to let my reader see the general line of my reasoning, so as to understand its bearing, and to leave it to him to fill up the nice distinctions of "limiting words."

If I were taking an excursion in the field of nature with a child, I should stop and lift him over every stile, and carry him across every brook; but if I were walking with a man, I should take for granted that he could get over the stiles and across the brooks as well as myself; and that, without minding these trifles, we might expatiate together on the general beauties of the scene. So here, in our present excursion on the field of philosophy, it was my desire to say enough to enable my readers to grasp the general argument, leaving it to their own understandings to fill up the nice distinctions and minute steps of the reasoning,

and thus taking it for granted that they were able to take a large, and generous, and comprehensive view of the subject as well as myself. I admit that I have in this way laid myself open to those who are disposed (as Shakspeare terms it) to "lie at the catch" and to make me an "offender for a word." But I expected none such, and wished to pay a better compliment both to the candour and understanding of my readers: and after all, all that I have said on this little treatise, is merely to set the mind a-thinking, for the whole of it is but a drop in the ocean compared with the vast materials of thought within the compass of "The Almighty's Everlasting Circles."

Philalethes concludes his paper by saying, When so much pains are taken to convert the heathen, why not bestow some pains to convince the infidel of our own country? If Philalethes, in this sentence, intends any allusion to himself, I can only say that nothing would rejoice my heart more than to be enabled to be of service to him, and to write any thing for his real good-but how shall I attempt it? One would think that the most likely way to approach the mind of the man who professes to be a philosopher, and refuses to receive the Scriptures on their own authority, would be to demonstrate the harmony that subsists between the Scriptures and sound philosophy, and to prove, whenever it is possible, the truth of any one of the leading doctrines of scripture by philosophic argument. This appears to be the very way, perhaps the only way, of approaching such This way I have attempted, for I had supposed that the "Almighty's Everlasting Circles" (even with all its faults) was the very paper for a philosophic mind; and the kind of reasoning Philalethes wanted, when he said, Why not attempt to convince the infidel of our own country? But Philalethes is so offended at the bare mention of scripture, as to render him unable or

unwilling to understand my argument. Still, as I would most gladly serve him, I will make one further attempt of another kind. As a humble step towards this, I would kindly put him in the road, by gently removing a false impression under which he evidently labours. His reasoning clearly shows an impression upon his mind, that external evidence is that which chiefly and principally produces religious conviction in the heart. Now all those who really love and believe the Scriptures, will tell him that they derived their conviction and their love. not so much from the external as from the internal evidence of the Scriptures; not so much from dry historical proofs and arguments, as from the internal structure of the Scriptures themselves. They have there seen such a picture of their own hearts as they are sure none but God himself could draw; they have felt the salvation of the gospel exactly suited to their wants; and they have derived peace and joy to the heart, and

intellectual food to the soul, from the Scriptures. And should you try to persuade these persons that the Scriptures are a delusion, you might as well try to persuade a famished man who has just been satisfied with bread, that it was not food he had eaten; you might as well tell them that there is neither light nor heat in the sun, when they have seen the one and felt the other.

But in order to believe and love the gospel, a man must first feel his need of it; he must feel that he is poor, and ignorant, and blind, that he is a dying creature, and yet possessed of a never-dying soul; his pride must be brought down, he must feel himself but a worm in the presence of his Maker, and think it the highest honour to be permitted to learn when his God condescends to teach.

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